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INDOOR WINTER GARDEN- ING AND FLORAL DECORATION.

A good selection, arrangement and artistic mounting enhance the effect of plants and florals as interior embellishments, it is no matter of surprise that the general progress of artistic taste should have resulted in more studious efforts for their attractive display and that larger sums than ever should be lavished on them. Where heaviness has been developed in the appointments of a

room florals and foliage may be so disposed as sensibly to relieve it; where all surroundings are consistently pleasing and elegant they enhance with their brightness and beauty the general tone.

Together with available exotics and native growths from green-house and hot-house, the Winter has its own very liberal contributions of blooms and flowering plants, ferns and similar foliage and joyous creepers to compensate within doors for the loss of outer sylvan glories and brilliant garden beds. Among flowers the geranium, pansy, tulip, Chinese primrose, Cape heath, Christmas rose and hyacinth put out their blossoms. Among berries are the holly and the mistletoe, and others garnered in the Summer and early Autumn. Then there are wild grasses dried, serviceable for their own grace and softening the intenser lines of the flowers among which they are placed.

For the hall, in the absence of artificial heat hardy plants are alone introduced, being capable of resisting draughts and cold. These may properly include palms, agaves, the India rubber plant, the pangaroo vine and dracemas. Hardy ferns are always charming as centers or on edges of stands. Pot plants sunk in carved brackets befit the walls. Pots may also be arranged on a table where they will be clearly seen, or mounted on pedestals.

One or two corners, according to shape of the halls, may be selected for massing foliage. However disposed, bold, distinctive plants are preferable here.

Prime features may be made in the plant and floral decorations of landings, those being best which present a light aerial effect. Mixed varieties of ferns, with hyacinths, scarlet begonia and bouvardia, also geraniums, are very suitable. These may be set in majolica vases or rustic jardinettes. A richer effect is given by crimson predominating in wall surface or floor cloth.

A room supplied with abundant light will allow of flowers being placed in any position, still leaving certain preferences of place for stands and hanging brackets. Soft wooded plants, which possess also soft leaves, should be placed near the window and turned every few days. Succulent plants will look admirably mounted on sideboard or table at the opposite extremity of the room to the windows. For centers of stands furnished with flowers, dracemas with their fine open structure of stems, or the cocoanut, palm or India rubber plant, will look well. The disposal of flowers to the sun under artificial light, demands attention to the character and direction of that light, but any position is good in which they are fairly seen with the least possible shadow.

Brackets facing each other are especially favorable for the full display of flowers and foliage on a stand in their line of light. Some of the stands, ordinarily of glass, specially constructed to be lighted by chandeliers, have small trumpet-like centers for bouquet forms at top, with one or two flat tazzas circling the stems beneath, with bright green and white enameled zinc pans.

Three sided projecting windows to a parlor or drawing-room are especially favorable for decoration. Trailing plants will supply grace if only in hiding angular structural lines. Of these ivy shoots may be easily introduced from outside, or the shoots may rise from roots imbedded in small triangular zinc trays attached to the skirting board and hidden behind pot plants placed on the floor. Suspended baskets lined with moss may have their plants overshadowed by drooping ferns, whilst graceful trailers find their way upward along the triple wire supports. Side brackets may reach out towards the center basket, creepers dropping from the edges of both.

For the middle of floor area of windows a flower stand is appropriate. This may contain in center such plants as the crimson tinted yucca, dracema, agave and ficus, also succulent plants and the smaller choice varieties of florals or the graceful *isolepa gracilis* and *festuca* may alternate around the borders.

The attachment of bouquets somewhat flattened and fan shaped to hanging draperies is a pretty device. For reception and ball-rooms flowers may be used in profusion, the decorations including festoons and loops.

In setting out glasscases, the strongest plants should be in

the center, the tender ferns and pitcher plants toward the borders. A serviceable window case corresponds in size and is attached to the lower frame of the window, thus securing a full play of light. For small majolica and other ceramic vases, or to blend with other flowering plants, the Mediterranean arbutus, the flowers of which burst from their tiny bells in December—a laurel like bush best placed among evergreens and berries should not be omitted; neither the brilliant scarlet berries, unpoetically named roast beef plant. Ferns in stands will best flourish when each variety is placed in a separate pot.

All pots, whatever the plants, should have their bases overlaid within with small fragments of pottery, and over these cocoanut fiber or moss, to facilitate drainage. Sand mixed with mold to render it more porous.

The appearance of flower vases on mantels will be improved by avoiding formality in placing them. A single one would look well towards the extremity of the shelf; and two may be placed near each other towards the ends. The same principle may be adopted in disposing them on various articles of furniture.

For a drawing-room a tazza on a fluted pedestal with flowers nestling at base is very appropriate; so also rustic jardinettes.

During the Summer fashion inclined to substitute small vases with clusters of flowers, one placed beside each guest, for central stands or stands at the extremities of dining-tables, but new fashions in the floral domain seldom outlast a season, and stands with trumpet-shaped apex and tazzas on glass stems, or of the type represented by a number of trumpet forms springing outward from the base, or branched candelabra forms will never cease to figure as attractive ornaments in themselves, and as setting out flowers in artistic modes. Glass vases or stands, if colored, should be of the most delicate shades, so as not to compete with the hues of the flowers. Potted plants may be made to appear on the dinner table without the pots, producing elegant effects.

For extra table leaves at the center or extremities, leaves of pine wood are substituted, each divided in two halves, and each half having a semi-circular aperture which is brought round the stem of the plant, or narrow sheet metal strips are fitted in a border of the table between leaves slightly parted, leaving between them a longitudinal aperture. Two table cloths are employed, these overlapping each other, well ironed down and pinned closely round the plants, which may be encircled by dried moss. Ferns and geraniums thus displayed look particularly well. Gracefully drooping wild grasses to fill out small vases with flowers. They group well with rhodanthes of pink and white varieties, and with a variety of everlastings added serve as bouquets in the absence of flowers.

In all cases the luster of the dinner set is improved by the presence of flowers, and the finer the damask tablecloth the better will both it and the flowers appear. When stands are used they should be such as will not obstruct the view of guests facing each other.

Some guidance as to color in flower and leaf grouping will be afforded by remembering that the secondary colors, yellow and red, blue and red, yellow and blue, or orange, purple and green contrast harmoniously with the primary colors, whilst the tertiary colors, olive, citron and russet harmonize with the primaries as neutral tints in harmonious opposition to the secondaries.

Zinc pans in wire stands protect the carpet from any percolating moisture. Moss, which preserves flowers longer than sand, should be thoroughly washed before being used. Transparent glass receptacles and zinc trays of tazzas should be supplied with glass-makers' sand, which is free from all yellowish tinge. In placing cut flowers or dried grasses in sand their natural positions should be maintained. Firmness of position may be added by wires, an art to be learnt from the horticulturist.

Care must be taken not to press dried grasses together before arranging them, and not to bruise the fern fronds. Flowers and foliage should never be crowded. The banking of flowers on mantel shelves or elsewhere is not to be admired. Profusion is no element of elegance and taste; besides in this banking we miss the grace of the supporting stalk, even if the stalk be only simulated on wire. Flowers liable to fall away may have their leaves fixed by placing a drop of gum in their centers.

In the conservatory itself the light has the best effect when falling wholly from above. If also lighted from the sides, the roof, especially if lofty, will look well if of cerulean blue glass, interspersed with white glass flakes representing fleecy clouds scudding across the firmament. We need not dwell here on the high artistic skill now displayed in setting conservatories out with rockwork, hedges and fountains, the designs for which are endless. It is sufficient that the pots be supplied with good earth mold and kept at an equable temperature and regularly watered.

Trimming at intervals should be attended to, and the leaves of certain plants, especially ferns, require to be washed.

BRASS brackets extending from the cornice are now made to support a gilt rod from which to hang pictures.